

Abstract Body – Paper 1 – Gathering teacher’s perceptions of evaluator feedback

Background / Context:

In response to initiatives to increase educator effectiveness states throughout the nation are placing greater emphasis on teacher evaluation tools that differentiate teacher effectiveness and include timely and constructive feedback. One of the three principles of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility waivers requires that states develop and implement teacher evaluation and support systems that “provide clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, p. 6). As states and districts begin to develop and implement new teacher evaluation systems, they need to identify ways to use evaluation findings to provide individualized feedback that will facilitate professional development (Kane & Staiger, 2012).

In response to these needs REL Central developed a research project in collaboration with members of the educator effectiveness research alliance to examine perceptions of evaluator feedback. This presentation will describe efforts to develop and test a survey to gather teacher’s perceptions of the feedback they receive from their evaluators, specifically their perceptions usefulness, accuracy, and credibility of the feedback. The presentation will provide information on the iterative process used to develop and test the survey and will also describe how the survey is being used in research and evaluation efforts.

Purpose / Objective / Research Question / Focus of Study:

REL Central conducted a study during the 2014/15 school year to examine relationships among feedback characteristics (perceived utility and accuracy of evaluator feedback and credibility of the person providing the feedback), access to resources related to the feedback, teacher response to feedback, and teacher performance. The Examining Evaluator Feedback Survey was developed to collect information for that study. The theoretical framework used to develop the survey is provided in appendix B (figure B1). A list of survey questions is provided in appendix B (Table B1)

Setting:

The survey was pilot tested in school districts in two states in the central region who were implementing new teacher evaluation systems focused on providing timely and relevant feedback to teachers in order to increase performance.

Population / Participants / Subjects:

The subjects included an advisory panel, cognitive interview participants and survey respondents. The advisory panel comprised seven members, including expert survey developers, state leaders, and district leaders with oversight for educator evaluation systems. Nine teachers were interviewed by the study team using a structured interview protocol. Following the cognitive interviews, the revised survey was administered to 196 teachers, 190 of whom completed the full survey.

Research Design:

The survey was developed using an iterative process that included such survey development methods as expert review, cognitive interviews, and statistical modeling (Presser et al., 2004; Rothgeb, 2008). The original survey questions were formulated based on previous research as well as unpublished surveys that the study team had implemented in evaluations of various teacher evaluation systems. The questions were reviewed and revised based on feedback from an advisory committee and teachers. The survey was then administered to 196 teachers, and the results were used to examine its reliability and validity. The stages of development are described in Appendix B (figure B2)

Data Collection and Analysis:

Researchers conducted an expert panel review and cognitive interviews to examine the clarity of the survey questions to ensure that the survey items were understood and easy to answer. To determine whether the survey was relevant to teacher evaluation systems in different contexts and whether the survey had face validity, the study team conducted a webinar with an advisory panel in which the panel responded to questions about the clarity and applicability of the questions and the appropriateness of the directions and response options. To determine whether the survey questions were clear and would be uniformly interpreted by teachers, the study team conducted cognitive interviews with a sample of teachers. Following the cognitive interviews, the revised survey was administered to teachers. These data were used to examine the reliability and validity of the survey. Survey reliability and validity were examined using classical test theory, Rasch analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis. Analyses were conducted on the questions related to usefulness, accuracy, credibility, access to resources, and responsiveness.

Findings / Results:

The analyses provided evidence for the reliability and validity of the questions and the categories of Usefulness, Accuracy, Credibility, Access to Resources, and Responsiveness to inform state and district leaders about teachers' perceptions of evaluator feedback. These categories showed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas of 0.827–0.939. Confirmatory factor analysis suggested that the questions in these categories represent five distinct, though interrelated, categories. The importance of feedback questions are numbered in question sets because they share the same question prompts. The prompts were used to make the survey easier to take. The importance of feedback questions showed high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.931.

The final survey is scheduled to be released in the fall of 2015 as a tool with guidance on how states and districts can use the survey gather data on teacher's perceptions of evaluator feedback. The survey was administered as part of a REL Central research study for which the data is currently being analyzed to examine the relationship among the characteristics of performance feedback (usefulness, accuracy, and credibility) and teacher's responses to feedback. The survey was also administered by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to evaluators in Missouri prior to and after they attended professional development on providing feedback.

Conclusions:

The examining evaluator feedback survey is designed to gather teacher's perceptions of the feedback they receive from their evaluators. The survey is being used to study theories of performance feedback that have limited research in the education field to provide states and districts with useful information about teacher's perceptions of evaluator feedback and factors that are related to teacher's use of feedback. The survey is also a tool that states and districts can use to gather perceptions of feedback in their own settings.

Appendix A. References

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Appendix B. Tables and Figures

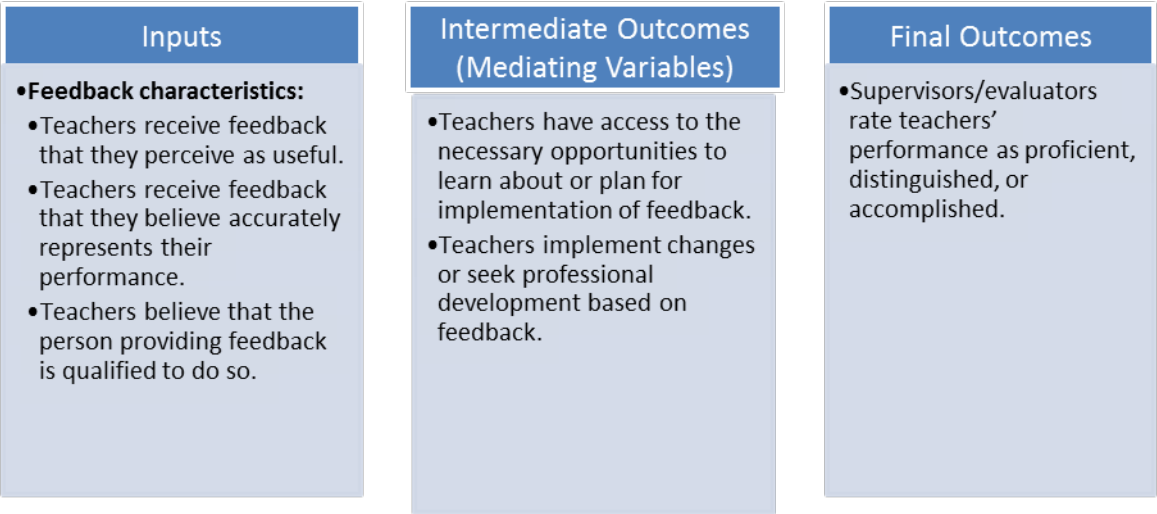


Figure B1. Theoretical Framework for Examining Evaluator Feedback Study

Table B1. List of Examining Evaluator Feedback Survey Questions

Section	Description	Question number
Background information	Definition of designated evaluator	1
	Designated teacher evaluator in the current school year	2
	Frequency of feedback conversation with designated evaluator	3
	Frequency of written feedback from designated evaluator	4
Feedback characteristics (Includes five categories of questions)	Usefulness: perceived usefulness of evaluator's feedback	5 (a-g)
	Accuracy: perceived accuracy of evaluator's feedback	6 (a-d)
	Credibility: perceived credibility of evaluator	7 (a-e)
	Access to resources: perceived access to professional development and other resources needed to respond to evaluation feedback	8 (a-d)
	Responsiveness: actions teacher took in response to evaluation feedback	9 (a-e)
Importance of feedback characteristics	Importance of the following characteristics when deciding how to respond to the feedback:	10 (a-i)
	• Perceiving the feedback as useful.	11 (a-b)
	• Having confidence in the accuracy of the evaluation feedback.	12 (a-e)
	• Perceiving the evaluator as credible.	13 (a-d)
	• Having access to relevant resources.	
Belief about instructional improvement	Belief about whether evaluation feedback improved teacher's instruction	14
Teacher demographics	Number of years teaching	15
	Grade level or levels currently teaching	16
	Subject area or areas currently teaching	17



Figure B2. Survey Development Process